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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 000917

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [IT](#) [UNHRC](#)

SUBJECT: UNCHR 61: ITALIAN RESPONSES

REF: STATE 42847

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Tom Countryman for reasons 1.4(b)(d).

1. (C) Laborcouns met 3/17 with Carlo Campanile, Director of the MFA's Human Rights Office, to deliver reftel points. Italy remains supportive of almost all U.S. positions on pending UNCHR resolutions but will continue to work primarily within the EU framework. Specific Italian concerns include passage of resolutions on technical assistance and cooperation on Somalia and public information on human rights; both passed by consensus last year, and Italy hopes the U.S. will support them again this session.

2. (C) No-action motions/country specific resolutions: Campanile said that Italy shares our concerns with no-action motions and has voted consistently against them. Italy continues to strongly support country specific resolutions.

3. (C) Democracy caucus activities: Italy agrees that a democracy caucus would advance our mutual goals and increase the visibility of the issue. It will support Romania's democracy resolution, and Campanile hoped the elections resolution could be used to support the electoral process in both Iraq and Afghanistan.

4. (C) Death penalty: Until 1977, Italy had the lead in managing this resolution and, for domestic political reasons, will continue to work to increase the number of co-sponsors for a measure to end capital punishment. However, they agree that only one resolution is necessary.

5 (C). Cuba: Italy received the text of this resolution two days ago and has not yet formed a position. Camanile reiterated that Italy shares the U.S. concern about violations of human rights in Cuba, especially detention of political prisoners. However, he indicated that Italy would work through the EU Presidency to find a common position acceptable across the board. Laborcouns requested an update as soon as Italy made a decision on the resolution.

6. (C) Belarus: This is an EU resolution, and Italy will cosponsor it. In fact, Campanile said that Italy was a bit disappointed that the U.S. did not again take the lead in sponsoring the resolution alone.

7. (C) DPRK: Italy will support the U.S. resolution.

8. (C) Religious Intolerance/Anti-Semitism: Italy strongly supports both resolutions, and Campanile noted that the text of the 2004 Third Committee resolution against anti-Semitism was stronger than that cited in the 2003 CHR resolution. Italy, through the EU Presidency, was pushing for inclusion of the stronger 2004 language.

9. (C) Israel/Arab-Israeli Conflict: Campanile reiterated that Italian and U.S. views on the peace process remain very close. Italy hopes for language that will reflect the positive aspects of recent developments and is working with other EU states to urge that they consider the text on its merits and avoid inflammatory language. Italy does not want to see the same old language as was used last year. They are also concerned that the Palestinian initiative to introduce its own text, which Italy has not yet seen, will make passage of a balanced resolution very difficult.

10. (C) China: Italy is waiting to see the U.S. text. Campanile repeated that Italy opposes no-action motions like those habitually used by China.

11. (C) Sudan: Italy remains very concerned about conditions in Darfur and will be carefully scrutinizing the text of the African states' resolution. They want the resolution to reflect the seriousness of the human rights situation and doubt the African text will do the job. If it does not meet Italian standards, they may veto it. The EU may also table its own resolution, an action which Camanile fears will set up a political battle that the EU will lose.

12. (C) Campanile does not expect EU resolutions on Zimbabwe or Chechnya, as past efforts have been unsuccessful and the EU is now pursuing different avenues to promote human rights with these two countries. Italy will support a resolution on Nepal.

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